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Title: Plight of cardamom growers in the Country.

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID (PERIYAKULAM): Sir, I rise to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Government for accepting the recommendations of the Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Commission because it was convinced that the situation in the Iddukki district (Kerala) was serious and critical for cardamom planters.

20.38 hrs.

(Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan *in the Chair*)

The Commission had stated that the most important cause contributing to the farmers' distress in Idukki District is their high indebtedness, which had accumulated beyond their repaying capacity. The Commission has disclosed that 473 farmers had committed suicide since 1998. In this context, the Commission has recommended loan waiver up to four hectare and complete waiver of loan and interest up to March, 2008. So, how much amount has been released for their debt relief?

To better serve the purpose of the appointment of the Commission, there must be a separate scheme of Debt Relief Measures for Idukki farmers, broader, effective and locality specific on the lines of the Commission report.

At this juncture, it is necessary to raise the limit of eligibility of planters from two hectare to four hectare as the plantations are in the hilly areas in Tamil Nadu and adjoining Kerala and to abolish the ceiling fixed as one lakh in plantation sector whereas there is no limit in other crops.

I would like to stress on the Government that the real intent and purpose of loan waiver in cardamom plantation sector would be served by increasing the area of cultivation from two hectare to four hectare in all the cardamom cultivation plants. [a102]